CLAIMS

I claim:

1.   A security system for detecting unauthorized disconnection of electronic equipment from a network, the security system comprising:

     at least one central processing unit (CPU);

     at least one piece of electronic equipment;

     a security station;

     data transfer means for electronically interconnecting the at least one CPU, the at least one piece of electronic equipment, and the security station;

     the CPU including security software for detecting unauthorized disconnection of the electronic equipment from the network and sending an alarm signal to the security station.

2.   The security system as in Claim 1 wherein the at least one CPU comprises a computer having a computer network card which together with data transmission lines form the data transfer means.

3.   The security system as in Claim 1 wherein the security station comprises a remotely located security station and the data transfer means further includes a modem and at least one telephonic data transmission line for connecting the CPU to the security station.

4.   The security system as defined in Claim 1 wherein the at least one piece of electronic equipment includes at least one non-computer electronic device and wherein the data transfer means includes an IEEE 1394 Serial Bus Standard digital network and wire data communication lines.

5.   The security system as in Claim 1 wherein

the security software includes client security software and server security software; and wherein

the at least one piece of electronic equipment comprises at least one client computer having the client security software installed thereon,

the at least one CPU comprises at least one server computer having the server security software installed thereon,

and wherein, the server security software includes:

means for determining if the at least one client computer is logged on to the network;

means for polling the at least one client computer via the data transfer means;

and wherein, the client security software includes:

means, responsive to the polling of the at least one client computer, for acknowledging the polling;

and wherein, the server security software further includes:

means for sensing the acknowledging; and

means for sending an alarm signal from the CPU to the security station in the event no acknowledging is sensed.

6.   The security system as in Claim 5 wherein the server security software means for sending the alarm signal further includes means for identifying a specific at least one client computer that does not acknowledge the polling.

7.   The security system as defined in Claim 5 wherein the data transfer means includes an ETHERNET.RTM. network and 10BaseT wiring coupling the at least one client computer and the at least one server computer to one another.

8.   The security system as defined in Claim 5 wherein the data transfer means includes a wireless network coupling the at least one client computer and the at least one server computer to one another.

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9.   A security system for detecting unauthorized disconnection of computers from a network, the security system comprising:

a plurality of server computers;

a plurality of client computers;

a security station;

data transfer means for interconnecting the plurality of server computers with the plurality of client computers and the security station;

the plurality of server computers having server security software installed thereon and the plurality of client computers having client security software installed thereon;

the server security software includes means for:

determining which of the plurality of client computers are logged on to the network;

supplying a polling signal from the plurality of server computers to polled computers via the data transfer means, wherein the polled computers include the plurality of client computers determined by the determining step to be logged on to the network;

the client security software includes means for:

responsive to the polling signal, supplying an acknowledge signal from the polled computers to the server computers via the data transfer means;

the server security software further includes means for:

receiving the acknowledge signal; and

sending an alarm signal to the security station in response to a failure to receive the acknowledge signal.

10.   A security system as in Claim 9 wherein the data transfer means further includes a telephonic means for interconnecting the network with the security station wherein the security station is remotely located.

11. A security system as in Claim 9 wherein the data transfer means includes a wireless data communication system which interconnects the plurality of servers, the plurality of client computers, and the security station.

12. A security system as in Claim 11 wherein the data transfer means further includes telephone lines which interconnect the network with the security station wherein the security station is remotely located.

13. The security system of Claim 9 wherein the server security software means for supplying a polling signal from the server computers to polled computers via the data transfer means, includes means for generating the polling signal at intermittent time intervals.

14. The security system of Claim 13 wherein the server security software means for determining whether the at least one client computer is logged on to the network includes:

a means for listing as logged on, the at least one client computer the determining means determines is logged on to the network;

and wherein the server security software means for supplying the polling signal at intermittent time intervals includes a means for repeatedly supplying the polling signal to each of the client computers listed as logged on.

15. The security system of Claim 9 wherein the server security software means for sending an alarm signal to the security station in response to a failure to receive the acknowledge signal from a polled computer includes means for sending the alarm signal wherein the alarm signal specifically identifies which of the at least one client computer has been disconnected from the network.

16. A system as in Claim 9 wherein the data transfer means for interconnecting the plurality of server computers, the plurality of client computers,

and the security station includes a plurality of local area networks (LANs) interconnected to each other by bridges, and wherein the plurality of server computers comprises a plurality of local server computers and wherein the plurality of client computers includes a plurality of local client computers, each LAN including a local server and at least one local client computer interconnected by a local area network data transfer means.

17.   A system as in Claim 16 wherein

the server security software installed on plurality of local server computers includes:

determining means for determining if the plurality of local client computers are logged on to the network;

supplying means for supplying a polling signal from a polling local server computer to polled computers via the data transfer means, wherein the polled computers further comprise a set of local client computers selected from the plurality of local client computers, the set of local client computers including only local client computers having the same LAN as the polling local server computer;

the client security software includes means for:

responsive to the polling signal, supplying an acknowledge signal from the polled computers to the polling local server computer via the data transfer means.

18.   A system as in Claim 17 wherein,

the determining means of the server security further includes means for determining if the plurality of local server computers are logged on to the network; and wherein

the supplying means for supplying the polling signal from a polling local server computer to polled computers includes supplying a polling signal to polled

computers wherein the polled computers further include the plurality of server computers; and wherein

the server security software installed on the plurality of server computers further includes means for:

responsive to the polling signal, the plurality of server computers, supplying an acknowledge signal to the polling computer via the data transfer means.

19.   A central processing unit having server security software installed thereon, the server security software including:

means for determining if at least one piece of electronic equipment is interconnected to a network containing the central processing unit;

means for determining if the at least one piece of electronic equipment is logged on to the network;

means for polling the at least one piece of electronic equipment;

responsive to an acknowledge signal generated by the at least one piece of electronic equipment in response to the polling, the server security software further including;

means for receiving the acknowledge signal; and

means for generating an alarm signal from the central processing unit in the event no acknowledge signal is received.

20.   A central processing unit as in Claim 19 wherein the server security software means for generating an alarm signal includes generating an audible alarm sound.

21.   A central processing unit as in Claim 19 wherein the server security software means for generating an alarm signal includes generating an electronic alarm signal for transmitting to a security station.

22.   A piece of electronic equipment having client security software installed thereon, the client security software including:

means for logging the electronic equipment onto a network containing a central processing unit, wherein the central processing unit includes server security software installed thereon;

means, responsive to polling initiated by the central processing unit, for acknowledging the polling, provided that the electronic equipment is logged onto the network.

23.   A method for detecting unauthorized disconnection of computers from a network, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a plurality of server computers having server security software installed thereon;

providing a plurality of client computers having client server security software installed thereon;

providing a security station;

interconnecting the plurality of server computers, the plurality of client computers, and the security station with a data transfer means to form the network;

logging the plurality of client computers and the plurality of server computers onto the network;

the server security software enabling the steps of:

determining which of the plurality of client computers are logged on to the network;

polling of at least one polled computer, initiated by at least one polling computer, wherein the at least one polling computer comprises at least one of the plurality of server computers, and wherein the at least one polled computer comprises the plurality of client computers determined by the determining step to be logged on to the network;

the client security software enabling the steps:

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responsive to the polling signal, supplying an acknowledge signal from the at least one polled computer to the at least one polling computer;

the server security software further enabling the steps:

receiving the acknowledge signal by the at least one polling computer; and

sending an alarm signal to the security station in response to a failure to receive the acknowledge signal from a polled computer.

24.   The method of Claim 23 wherein the step of interconnecting includes interconnecting the plurality of server computers, the plurality of client computers, and the security station with the data transfer means comprising telephone lines which interconnect the network with the security station wherein the security station is remotely located.

25.   The method of Claim 23 wherein the step of interconnecting includes interconnecting the plurality of server computers, the plurality of client computers, and the security station with a data transfer means comprising a wireless data communication system which interconnects the plurality of servers, the plurality of client computers, and the security station.

26.   The method of Claim 23 wherein the step of sending the alarm signal further includes sending an alarm signal which can identify the at least one client computer that did not supply an acknowledge signal.